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THE

STORY

OF

ELIZABETH CANNING

CONSIDERED.

By Dr. HILL.

THE STORY OF *ELIZABETH CANNING* CONSIDERED

By Dr. HILL.

With REMARKS on what has been called, *A Clear State of her Caſe*, by Mr. FIELDING; and Anſwers to the ſeveral Arguments and Suppoſitions of that Writer.

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THE STORY OF *ELIZABETH CANNING* CONSIDERED.

BEFORE I ſpeak any thing in ſupport of that Truth, on the Evidence of which the Life of a moſt injur'd Perſon depends; I think it neceſſary, that I may not ſeem, under the Colour of public Information, to be acting an intereſted Part, and defending my own Conduct, to ſay, that I am convinced it needs

no Defence. Whatſoever the Malice of little Adverſaries may wiſh to propagate on this Head, I ſhall be at Eaſe in my own Mind, while conſcious of the Honeſty of my Intention; and I have Reaſon to be ſatisfied, with Regard to the Opinion of the World, while I have the Honour to be told, that he who is certainly the beſt Judge, and perhaps the beſt Perſon in it, ſays, that I have done as became a prudent Man.

No one will call it a bad Action, that I have endeavoured to obtain the Truth, in a Caſe, where Humanity muſt have engaged any, who had the leaſt Suſpicion of Falſhood, to wiſh the Secret known; it would have been a very imprudent one for him, who had no Authority to have taken that Confeſſion which diſcovered it; and it has appeared to thoſe who are better Judges, that it was moſt right, when the Preparation was made for that Confeſſion, to apply to the ſupreme Magiſtrate of the Court, in which the Cauſe had been tried, to receive it. This is all I have done in the Matter.

I claim no Praiſe from it; that belongs to another; but neither can I regard thoſe who ſhall think, that which I have done merits Cenſure.

Being

Being diſintereſted, I may expect Credit; but there is yet a Reaſon why I ſhall ſpeak leſs freely. 'Tis an unfortunate Circumſtance, that with the Innocence of this Perſon, there is connected the Crime of another; if not the intentional, at leaſt the effectual Crime: The Evidence that abſolves the one accuſes the other; and it is one of thoſe Incidents, under which Humanity is wounded by the Means, while it glories in the End.

It will be found, however romantic, or however abſurd, ſuch Conduct may appear to many, that I have acted in this only on the Principle of real Honeſty and public Utility; and as I have acted, I would wiſh to ſee others alſo act. But while I ſhall plead yet farther in the Cauſe of a Perſon who is innocent, whom I have not ſeen, nor do know that I ever ſhall ſee; and in whoſe Favour, I do avow in the Face of Almighty God, no Application whatſoever has been made to me; it will give me Pain to reflect that in every Argument I am wounding another; concerning whom I know nothing of Certainty, more than appears from this Evidence; nor can judge how far what ſo appears to be her Guilt, may admit of Palliation.

I know

I know how improper, nay, how diſhoneſt, it is in many Caſes to prepoſſeſs the Public againſt thoſe whom their Country has not yet found guilty of any Crime: No Hiſtory can propuce a greater Inſtance of it than is before us in the preſent Story; and I ſhall think the Obligation ſacred that reſtrains my Hand upon every other Occaſion: But here the Life of a Perſon, certainly innocent, is concern'd on the one Part; and not ſo much as the Life, even ſhould the worſt be proved, and the Laws put in their fulleſt Execution, of one, as certainly a Cauſe of the greateſt Diſtreſs, and almoſt of Death to that Innocent, on the other. As this is the Caſe in the preſent Enquiry, the Particularity of the Circumſtance may diſpenſe with what would be faulty on a different Occaſion.

I muſt the more think the doing of this neceſſary, and therefore juſtifiable, as mean Sophiſtry, and the Parade of Argument, have been employed on the other Side; and the Attempt of vindicating the Accuſer, though but a ſecondary Conſideration, has, with ſome Perſons, altho' I hope with none of Conſequence, prevailed againſt that Proof of Innocence on the Part of the Accuſed, which alone can prevent

prevent the Execution of a Sentence procured by a confeſs'd Perjury.

I had read the Pamphlet in which theſe are us'd, as a Juſtification only of the Conduct of a Man, againſt whom I have no Reſentment; and, as ſuch, I could not deſire to invalidate any thing that it contained: But though I had no Wiſh againſt its Succeſs on that Account, I cannot ſee it aiming to overthrow that Juſtice and Compaſſion, which were growing up in the Minds of all Men, with Reſpect to the Object whom I had propoſed to them as ſo worthy of thoſe Emotions, without treating it with that Severity, and condemning it to that Ignominy which it deſerves; without detecting its Miſrepreſentations, refuting its imagined Arguments, and pointing out to thoſe, who have not already ſeen it, where they are to ſmile upon its Puerility.

If it be poſſible that I ſhould by this Piece of Juſtice make that Man more my Enemy, than he is at preſent; I tell him, no Part of this is written with that immediate Deſign: But I ſhall alſo add, that the Importance of the Cauſe will compenſate all that his pointleſs Arms can return upon the Occaſion; and that, if I ſhall become conſcious, I have been inſtrumental, tho'

in

in ever ſo ſmall a Degree, in ſaving the Life of an innocent Perſon, the Remembrance will make me enjoy the Outrages of all his little Followers.

But with the ſame Warmth, under which I ſhall feel this Pleaſure, I muſt be ſenſible of the Pain which will attend the Conſciouſneſs, that what I ſay, may be ſo conſtrued as to hurt the other. I beg to be believed that I have no Intent, for moſt aſſuredly I have none, to injure her: Perhaps I look upon what ſhe has done, with leſs Severity than others. She may be able to prove that ſhe was ſomewhere confined, though ſhe was not at this Place; I hope ſhe will prove it: But as many other Accounts may be given how a Perſon, leſs innocent, might have been employed, I muſt have leave to name ſome of theſe: I muſt have leave, till ſuch a Fact is proved, to doubt the Truth of all; and to build the Teſtimony of the Convict's Innocence, in part, upon the Improbability of what at this Time appears her Story.

Whatſoever I ſhall advance on this Head, is alledg'd only as what might have happen'd, and I deſire it may be underſtood as meaning

meaning no otherwiſe. I have no particular Knowledge of the Truth with Reſpect to *Canning*; and therefore can be poſitive only with Regard to thoſe Proofs that appear of the Convict's Innocence. As this is the true Caſe, I beg that whatſoever I conjecture, may be received only as Conjecture, and may not hurt her in the Eye of the World.

When Truth is to be decided, Sophiſtry is impertinent; and when the Proofs are at hand, and are ſuch that all may judge by them, they uſe a Freedom to which they have little Right, who attempt to guide and to direct Mankind in their Determination. Whatſoever lies within our Knowledge more than others have had Opportunities of acquainting themſelves withal, it becomes a Duty to impart; but when that is done, by what Claim is it that we dictate? theſe or theſe Sirs! muſt be the Concluſions: We are to ſtate the Caſe, the World is to determine.

'Tis hard for him who has engag'd, be it no more than his Opinion on one Part, to be diſintereſted with reſpect to the other; nay, if he were unbiaſs'd, ſuch an one is ſtill but a ſingle Perſon; and he has little Candour,

and leſs Modeſty, if he ſuppoſes every Individual of the Publick is not as able as himſelf to judge upon that which he allows to be, or which he affects to call, clear Evidence.

As many things have come to my Knowledge in this ſtrange Affair, with which the Public cannot have been acquainted; it may be indulged me to ſpeak of them, without the Cenſure of Officiouſneſs; and as I have already delivered ſomething concerning an Enquiry into the Truth, which, as it appeared the Concern, ſo it has been the Study of ſome Perſons to invalidate, it may be eſteem'd a Duty in me to ſupport that which has already ſo appeared; and to do this the more fully, I ſhall add to it what farther the Time, the Nature of the Proceedings, and the Reſpect to thoſe under whoſe Cognizance the Whole now remains, may warrant me in diſcloſing.

I have ordered my Name to be put to this Pamphlet, that I may not be ſuppoſed the Writer of thoſe many other Pieces, which Ingenuity, or its Parent Hunger, may hereafter obtrude upon the World; or of ſome Things that have already

ready offer'd themſelves to its Notice; the Motives to which, ſeem rather to lie in perſonal Reſentment, than an Attachment to Juſtice. As the Original Papers will hereafter appear, what I ſhall now propoſe may ſtand as an Introduction to them: and it will anſwer alſo another Purpoſe; in that it will, I hope, prevent the imbibing of unjuſt Prejudices, and falſe Opinions, whether from the Deluded or the Deſigning, the Intereſted or the Ignorant.

The truth is of Importance; and it will be laid open: Till that ſhall be fully effected, the ſame Principle which influenc'd me, as unconcerned as any Man could be in the whole Matter, and of all Men the leaſt inclined to enter into Diſputes and Quarrels, to undertake the Protection, ſo far as it lay in my ſcanty Power, of the Innocent, pleads with me, ſo far as my Opportunities may permit, and ſo far as may be conſiſtent with that Character which every Man ought to hold ſacred, to prevent farther Error.

There will be thoſe who think me wrong from the Beginning; and were I actuated by their Sentiments only, I ſhould

agree

agree with them. It was not prudent to engage unneceſſarily, in a Cauſe that muſt become a Subject of Debate; but there are Motives ſuperior even to Prudence, and theſe had, in the preſent Caſe, a Right to Attention; Honeſty, Humanity, and Love of Juſtice: Theſe, I hope, I ſhall always, although it be at the Expence of ſome Scandal, prefer to that cold Principle; inaſmuch as I think it a greater Character to be an honeſt, than to be a wiſe Man.

Thus much it may have been neceſſary, though very unpleaſing, to ſay, with Reſpect to thoſe Motives which induced an unconcerned Perſon at all to meddle in this intricate Diſcovery; ſince thoſe whoſe own Hearts do not acknowledge any Thought that has not Self for its Centre, may not (uninformed of the Difference) ſuppoſe it poſſible any others ſhould have Place in the Breaſt of a Stranger. The Perſons are all unknown to me, but the Story was intereſting; and Humanity muſt have been unknown to him, who ſhould have been let into ſo much of it, as had come to my Knowledge, and not have enquired farther. I could have no Intereſt in the Event farther than as one Creature of the ſame Species is concerned in the Welfare

Welfare of another; nor was I of any Part, unleſs inclined to pity the miſerable Convict; becauſe ſhe was poor, and a Stranger, and oppreſs'd, and innocent. Such, at leaſt, I was, at that Time, inclin'd to believe her, and I am, by all that has paſs'd ſince, the more confirm'd in that Opinion.

It will appear, that I have weighty, nay, that I have unanſwerable and incontrovertible Evidence, that I ought to be ſo; whenever thoſe ſacred Proofs, which at this Time are in the Hands of that generous Magiſtrate who has obtained them, ſhall appear, and untill that Time come, perhaps it may not be thought ſingular in me to be perſuaded of the Innocence of this Woman, from the very Attempts which have been made by thoſe who eſpouſe her Proſecutors, to prove they are not guilty.

I have propoſed to conſider the whole Story; and to preſerve a Conduct anſwerable to that Intention, I ſhall begin with it ſomewhat earlier than thoſe have thought it prudent to do, who have hitherto treated of the Matter. To judge truly of People's Actions, we ſhould enquire into the Deſigns of them; and this is beſt done by attending to the earlieſt Notices.

Some

Some few Days after that *firſt* of *January*, on which this *little Child*, as thoſe who deſpairing to convince the Judgment, attempt the Paſſions of Mankind, affect to call her, is ſaid to have been carried away, I find the following Advertiſement in the moſt Univerſal of the Daily Papers.

" *Whereas* Elizabeth Cannon *went from* " *her Friends between* Hounſditch *and* " Biſhopſgate, *on* Monday *laſt, the* 1*ſt* " *Inſtant, between Nine and Ten o'Clock:* " *Whoever can give any Account where* " *ſhe is, ſhall have Two Guineas Reward;* " *to be paid by Mrs.* Cannon, *a Sawyer,* " *in* Aldermanbury *Poſtern, which will* " *be a great Satisfaction to her Mother.* " *She is freſh-colour'd, pitted with the* " *Small-Pox, has a high Forehead, light* " *Eye-brows, about five Foot high, eighteen* " *Years of Age, well ſet, had on a Maſ-* " *querade Purple Stuff Gown, a black* " *Petticoat, a white Chip Hat, bound round* " *with Green, a white Apron and Hand-* " *kerchief, blue Stockings, and Leather* " *Shoes.*

" *Note, It is* ſuppoſed *ſhe was* forcibly " taken away *by ſome evil-diſpoſed Per-* " *ſon, as ſhe was* heard to ſhriek out in " a Hackney-Coach *in* Biſhopſgate-ſtreet. " *If the Coachman remembers any thing*

" *of*

" *of the Affair, by giving an Account as*
" *above, he ſhall be handſomely rewarded*
" *for his Trouble.**

This is a Circumſtance, forgot by the diſintereſted; and paſs'd over, not imprudently, by thoſe who eſpouſe the Girl; but I muſt declare, that with me it has great Weight. Why ſuppoſed to be taken forcibly away? Are theſe Tranſactions common? or was there any Thing in the preſent Caſe to authoriſe ſuch an Imagination? To what Purpoſe ſhould ſhe be forced away! She is not handſome; ſo that the Deſign could not be upon her Perſon; and certainly the Dreſs that is deſcribed ſo largely, could not tempt any one to carry her off to rob her; nor was it neceſſary, for that might have been done where ſhe was ſeized; nay, and in the latter Accounts we are told it was done there.

Who heard her ſhriek! or what is become of the Hackney-Coach Part of the Story, no Syllable has been ſince uttered of it. Who ſhould know the Voice of a Servant of no Conſideration, calling in a ſtrange Part of the Town from a Coach? What muſt the Ruffians have been doing who ſuffer'd her to ſhriek! or who that heard ſuch

* Daily Advertiſer, January 6.

ſuch a Voice, and did, or that did not know the Perſon, would not have ſtopped the Carriage! How came he who heard ſo much not to call Perſons to aſſiſt him? there are enough in the Streets at Ten o'Clock; or, where's the Coachman, for Coaches do not drive themſelves, and certainly he might be found to juſtify the Story.

If a Coach carried her, where therefore is the Driver of it? or, if ſhe was dragged along, how did the People, who were taking all this Pains, and running all this Hazard, to no Sort of Purpoſe, get her undiſcovered through the Turnpikes? The Public will judge of this early Advertiſement as they think proper; to me the Determination that ſhould be grounded on it appears too obvious; and, perhaps, in due time it will be found ſupported.

From the Day of this Publication, by which the World was informed that ſuch a Girl was carried off by Ruffians, (a fine Preparative for what has follow'd!) we hear no more of her till her Return at the End of Eight-and-twenty Days; when ſhe tells her abſurd, incredible, and moſt ridiculous Story. A Piece of contradictory Incidents, and moſt improbable Events;

a waking Dream; the Reverie of an Idiot: A Relation that could not be allowed a Face of Likelihood; and that would have taken no hold on any, but as it pleaded to their Compaſſion.

It was not on the Credit of this Story that the unhappy Creature, in whoſe Caſe all theſe Endeavours have been us'd, was condemn'd. Let us not imagine Courts of Juſtice ſwallow ſuch Relations. 'Twas on the moſt full Account, given by one, who declared that ſhe had ſeen the whole Tranſaction of which the Court was concerned to judge. One, who being a Stranger to the Accuſer, and a Friend of the Perſons accuſed, declared ſhe ſaw the Robbery. This was an Evidence which muſt have been allowed by any Jury of judicious and unbiaſs'd Men. Now that we are convinced of the Innocence of the Perſons who were condemned upon the Credit paid to this Evidence, we muſt acknowledge, that human Wiſdom could not, at that Time, have diſcovered, nay ſcarce could have ſuſpected it was falſe; and that while unſuſpected, it had been Injuſtice not to have done exactly as was done upon the Trial.

We are now reviewing that Account in

a very different Light: we have now been let into the Secret of its Origin; we have ſeen her ſince voluntarily declare, that it was falſe and forg'd: not in part falſe, but in the Whole, and that it was the Off-ſpring only of her Terrors: and tho' actuated from the Influence of the ſame Apprehenſions, ſhe confirmed it at the Trial, ſhe now declares it, freely and voluntarily declares it, to have been all a Perjury.

She has confeſſed her Motive to the doing this, and that is it was ſuch an one, as might well have Effect upon an ignorant Creature: This I ſhall conſider at large when I come preſently to treat of her Informations. She has declared this to have been her only Motive; and thoſe who are moſt concerned, do acknowledge, that ſhe was very unwilling to give it; and was very difficultly brought to it. What Reaſon could ſhe have to contradict it? None! To this no one can ſpeak with more Authority than I: and I declare ſhe had none. It was to myſelf ſhe promis'd the Confeſſion. I had no Advantages to offer to her, nor any Power to terrify: nor was this done privately; ſo that there are Witneſſes who know how free and perfectly 'twas voluntary. I applied to the Lord Mayor, whom, 'till that Time, I never ſaw, to receive her Confeſſion: She was

ſent

ſent for; ſhe made it; and the Conſequences are natural.

The Lord Mayor had at that Time Proofs in his own Hands, as ſtrong as even this Confeſſion, of the perfect Innocence of the miſerable Convict; and he has ſince received innumerable more; all more preciſe, and punctual; more firm and more convincing. It can be no Reflection on a Court, in which the Determination is made from Evidence, to plead the Cauſe of that Innocency, which is proved by the after-diſcover'd Falſity of ſuch Evidence: Shame on the Folly or Malice that pretends it can, even though you, *Fielding*, have pretended it: nor has any thing been yet publiſh'd, more than what paſſed publickly; for the Examinations before the Lord-Mayor have not been made in Corners.

This is a Digreſſion, but the Inſinuations of bad Men have made it neceſſary. I ſhall return to the Relation. The pretty Innocent, ſuch we ſhould take her to be from the Story, tells us ſhe was tempted ſtrongly: ſhe was promis'd *fine Cloaths*, if ſhe would *go their Way*. This is the Account; and in the Name of Reaſon let us conſider it. The Phraſe is an odd and unnatural one; and the fine Cloaths were to be given. By whom? By one who hardly had a Co-

vering for herſelf, and in a Place where every thing ſpoke Beggary: Unnatural, ridiculous, and abſurd!

There can be no Cauſe aſſigned, why Men ſhould drag her many Miles, or why Women lock her up to periſh, without the leaſt Advantage, or the leaſt Proſpect of Advantage. I wiſh it could be ſaid there appears no End for which all this might be pretended; although there could be none for which it ſhould be done.

Did the prophetic Spirit of her Virtue foreſee exactly the Length of her Confinement? How came ſhe elſe to proportion, for it's plain ſhe did proportion, her Eating to it? There is, indeed, no Reaſon why ſhe ſhould not have foreſeen it, ſince the Duration was at her own Pleaſure. There appears no Cauſe why ſhe did not make that Eſcape the firſt Night, which ſhe effected on the laſt Day at Four in the Afternoon: and as it has been thought ſtrange that no one oppoſed the Perſons in the Night in carrying her thither; I ſhall add, that I think it ſtill more ſtrange no one was let into the Story on her Return. Her Weakneſs might have made her complain; her Terror ſpeak, and even her Countenance muſt have occaſioned Queſtion. People could

could not be wanting to this Purpoſe; for ſhe that could ſet out in the Afternoon to walk from *Enfield-Waſh* to *London*, muſt be met, over-taken, or ſeen, by many Hundred Perſons: her Figure was ſingular enough to have drawn the Attention of ſome of theſe, her Aſpect (as you deſcribe it) of them All: The Story has been enough ſpoken of to bring ſuch People to atteſt it, had there been any ſuch; but if any have appeared, it has not come to my Knowledge.

Acts of Cruelty have been practis'd by Ruffians: I grant you ſo much, mighty Reaſoner! but there has been a Motive. the worſt of them have never done it otherwiſe: Their own Safety is the Common Cauſe, and Cowards are to a Proverb cruel. But here Men endanger'd, and not ſecur'd their Safety, by the doing it; and had no End to anſwer when it was done. On the ſame Principle, before we can believe the Women (who has been condemned) would have run the Hazard of her Confinement, when they knew an Eſcape ſo practicable, we muſt expect to find ſome Motives to their doing it.

The Cant of the Subſcription was her *Virtue*, but there muſt have been a Face to ſtamp the Price on That: without it the Com-

Commodity's not marketable: Naked Virtue is of no Value unto the Sort of People theſe have been repreſented. Beſides, had there been even this Temptation, the Gipſey, who is charged with the Crime, could not have any Intent to anſwer in the obtaining of the Sacrifice. She did not keep the Houſe; and it could not be in Friendſhip to Mrs. *Wells*, for they were Strangers.

The poor Girl left her Mother plump: This, Sir, is your Account, and this the Partridge-Phraſe by which you expreſs it. She returned you ſay emaciated and black; this was on the 29th of *Jan.* and, on the 1ſt of *February*, ſhe went down to *Endfield* again: as you ſay, again. Never were Tranſitions ſo quick, as have been thoſe of this miraculous Girl; for ſhe was not black at this Time, upon this 1ſt of *February*. A Day or two had made an amazing Change; for thoſe who were preſent tell me, ſhe was at that Time red and white like other People.

There was a Time, when even the warmeſt Advocates for the pretended Injur'd, gave up all Expectation of Credit from the Nature of the Story, and reſted it upon the Weight of Evidence. I think, Sir, you was of the Number, and, for the

Credit

Credit of your Underſtanding, I hope you were: That Weight is taken off: that Evidence, it is confeſs'd, was Perjury. The Story now, therefore, ſtands on the Footing of its own Credibility; and thoſe who are the moſt violent in its Favour, have, in Effect, if not in Words, given it up as falſe: I hope they will do this in every Senſe. Humanity, tho' miſtaken in its Object, was a Plea ſufficient in her Favour when they firſt countenanc'd her; but Humanity now changes Sides, and the Wretch, who pines under the Sentence, claims its Offices.

Let not the once deluded, and ſince obſtinate Men, conceive they will be ſupported by the Teſtimony of the Girl's coming Home in this emaciated Condition, of this black Colour, and with this Aſpect of a putrid Carcaſe: Let them enquire, whether this was the Condition in which ſhe was firſt ſeen, and they will find it falſe: Let them aſk themſelves, and their own Reaſon, if a Creature, in ſuch a State, could have walked Home; they will find it as abſurd as the reſt of the wild Story: and there is as much Moral Certainty that it is falſe; invented by bad Men to ſerve Purpoſes; and countenanc'd by weak ones who believ'd it.

It does not appear, (unleſs her own contemptible Story can be believ'd) that ſhe was confin'd any where, otherwiſe than by her own Conſent: It is not true that ſhe returned in this dreadful Condition; nor can it be true, that ſhe could have ſupported Life till ſhe arrived at it, and after that have walked ten Miles immediately, or have been carried as far ſo very ſoon after it. That ſhe was not confin'd where ſhe ſays, is clear beyond all Poſſibility of Doubting, and there will remain not the leaſt Thought of it, even among her beſt Friends, as ſoon as the Proofs, now in the Lord Mayor's Hands, ſhall appear: In the mean Time, I, who have ſeen them, ſay it; and have, I hope, ſome Right to be believ'd.

Where a Girl, like this, could be; and how employed during the time; is not difficult to imagine. Not with a Lover certainly, ſay you! You would be happy, Sir, if all you beg ſhould be allowed you. Not with a Lover, Sir! Eighteen, let me remind you, is a critical Age; and what would not a Woman do, that had made an Eſcape, to recover her own Credit, and ſcreen her Lover. I pretend to no Knowledge of this, as having been the Caſe with Reſpect to the Girl of whom I ſpeak; but, if we are to reaſon, let us do it freely; and what appears ſo likely? The

The Deſcription ſhe gave of the Room in which ſhe had been confined, is urged by you to juſtify; but, Sir, that Circumſtance alone ought to condemn her. Let me not be underſtood to ſpeak of that Deſcription, which ſhe gave after ſhe had ſeen it: That Subterfuge may ſerve for the Excuſe of thoſe who will be found to want it. But let us now enquire with better Judgment: Let us, Sir, appeal to that Account ſhe gave before the ſitting Alderman, by whom ſhe was firſt examined; and we ſhall find it countenance the worſt that can be thought againſt her. Obſerve the Articles.

She deſcribed it to be a *dark* Room; in which ſhe lay upon the *Boards*; in which there was nothing except *a Grate* with a Gown in it; and a *few Pictures* over the Chimney; from which ſhe made her Eſcape by *forcing down ſome Boards*, and out of which ſhe had before diſcovered the Face of a Coachman, through certain *Cracks* in the Side.

Let thoſe who have ſeen the Room ſpeak whether this was a Deſcription of it. They will anſwer No. No, not in

any one Particular. Far from being *dark*, there are *two Windows* in it. Theſe have Caſements which were unfaſtened, out at which ſhe might have *eſcaped*, had ſhe been confined in it; ſo that pulling down of Boards to that Purpoſe could not be neceſſary: Out at theſe alſo, I ſuppoſe, ſhe might have *ſeen this Coachman*, ſo that ſhe needed not to peep through Cracks. There was no Grate in the Chimney: ſo that no body could have been guilty of this moſt houſewifely Trick of putting a Gown in one: Nor were there any Pictures over it. Of the latter there was no Probability to be any, becauſe the Houſe had no Profuſion of Furniture, and this was a Room of Lumber: And it is palpable there could have been no Grate in the Chimney of a long Time; for the whole Expanſe of it was found covered and overſpread with Cobwebs, the Work of many Generations of unmoleſted Spiders. Oh Providence that aſſiſts in theſe Diſcoveries!

But though there was not what ſhe ſaid ſhe ſaw in the Chimney, there was about it, Sir, that which ſhe muſt have ſeen, had ſhe been there, and which, had ſhe been there twenty-eight Days, ſhe muſt have ſeen often enough to have remembered it; there

there was a Caſement, put up over the Chimney to be out of the Way: and this not newly laid there, for it was alſo fixed to the Wall by Cobwebs of long Standing.

If this were all, Sir, is not this enough to prove ſhe never was in the Place? But this is little to the reſt. There was a Quantity of Hay, near half a Load, there: Surely too large a Matter to have been overlooked, and too important to have been forgotten: And there were a multitude of Things beſides; ſome if not all of which ſhe muſt have remembered; but not any one of all which ſhe mentioned.

Some who went firſt down, Neighbours and Men of Credit, who went to countenance and to ſupport her, had heard her Account of the Room, and when they ſaw it, were convinced that her Deſcription did not at all belong to it: they gave her up, and they are to be found to ſay ſo. Some who were too officious, eager to have the Story true, becauſe themſelves believed it, got there before her alſo; theſe, when they had heard the Objections, rode back Part of the Way to meet her, and after ſome Converſation with her; after, for, if I may have

Leave to conjecture from the Circumſtance, that is the leaſt that can be ſuppoſed, aſking her if there was not Hay there; that is, in Effect, after telling her there was, and that ſhe ſhould have ſaid ſo; rode back, and, with *Huzza's* of Triumph, cried they were all right yet; for ſhe ſaid now there was Hay in the Room. Was this or could it be an Evidence of Weight with the Impartial? The beſt Way to determine is to aſk one's ſelf the Queſtion. What would it have been to you who are now reading of it?

But let me call up fairly the reſt of your Arguments: You ſhall not ſay I deal partially with you, by omitting any that ſeem to yourſelf of Importance; and you ſhall hear the World ſay, ſo much I'll anſwer for them, that they are one as important and as concluſive as the other.

You have ſuppoſed the Girl not *wicked* enough to have deviſed ſuch a Deceit: That, God and her own Heart alone can tell; and neither you nor I have Right to judge of it. But you add, and this we both may judge of, That you do not ſuppoſe her *witty* enough to have invented the Story. I give you Joy, Sir, of your own

own Wit, for thinking ſo! I am very far from entertaining an high Opinion of the Girl's Intellects; but ſuch as they are, I think the Story tallies with them: none but a Fool could have deviſed ſo bad a one.

You ſay 'tis worthy of ſome Writer of Romances. I love to hear Men talk in Character: no one knows better how much Wit is neceſſary to the writing of ſuch Books; and, to do Juſtice to your laſt Performance, no Man has proved more fully, with how ſmall a Share of it, they may be written.

But I ſhall follow you through ſome more of theſe your ſuppoſed Improbabilities; and ſhew you they are all as probable as theſe. That ſhe ſhould fix upon a Place *ſo far from home*, is one of them. That may have been the very Reaſon why ſhe fixed upon it: To me it would have ſeemed much more ſtrange, if ſhe had fixed on one that was nearer. The farther off, the farther from Detection.

That Mrs. *Wells*'s Houſe ſhould be particularly hit upon ſeems ſtrange to you. But Mrs. *Wells*'s was a Houſe of evil Fame, and there was no other ſuch about the Neighbour-

Neighbourhood : The Improbability muſt needs be, therefore, that of their fixing upon any other.

We are aſked, How ſhould ſhe know this Houſe, as ſhe approached it ? No body ever heard that ſhe did know it, as ſhe approached : And for the famous Queſtion, How ſhe could, among a Number of People, fix upon the *Gipſy* whom ſhe had particularly deſcribed before, as the Perſon that had robbed her ? The Anſwer is a very fatal and ſevere one ; it is that ſhe *had not particularly deſcribed her before*. It is palpable ſhe never ſpoke of her even as a *Gipſy*, though no Woman ever poſſeſſed the Colour and the Character of that ſingular People ſo ſtrongly : Nor had ſhe given any particular Account of her Face ; which, had ſhe ever ſeen it before, muſt have been remembered ; for it is like that of no human Creature. The lower Part of it affected moſt remarkably by the Evil : The under Lip of an enormous Thickneſs ; and the Noſe ſuch as never before ſtood in a mortal Countenance.

But

But theſe are Trifles: You'll give me up all theſe: I know you will; for you'll do every Thing you muſt. You'll give all this and laugh at the Advantage. The Strength is yet behind: Theſe are the Outworks; but I ſhall overthrow your Citadel. This Evidence of *Hall*, you have reſerved to the End; and I have reſerved it too. Let us now ſtate it fairly. I'll give it all the Strength you can deſire; and when I have done ſo, I will ſhew you, but that's unneceſſary; I'll explain to the World, how all its falſe Strength was derived to it. Let us here take it in the whole.

The Account of the Tranſaction, with reſpect to the Robbery, you argue muſt be true, becauſe *Canning* and *Hall* relate it both alike. But all Men ſee how weak an Argument that is. I will not ſuppoſe Mr *Fielding* can be guilty of deſigning to impoſe upon the World in this or any Part of the Caſe which he has publiſhed; and therefore I will call it only a weak Argument. Let us conſider the Circumſtances under which theſe Accounts were procured, and we ſhall ſee they could not be otherwiſe than perfectly alike, even tho' they both were falſe.

We,

We, who ſuppoſe the Convict innocent, believe the Account of *Canning* to be a concerted Plan, long laboured, and well inculcated. That ſhe ſhould not vary herſelf in the relating it, will not therefore be wonderful: And I ſhall allow you Council! for you are not here acting in any other Character; that if the Evidence *Hall* had made a free and voluntary Confeſſion, without Fear, and without Conſtraint, and this Confeſſion had in all Points confirmed the Account of the other; and if ſhe had before known nothing of her Story; there would have been all the Argument and all the Weight in it that you would have us grant.

But let me aſk you, Sir, for none know better than you do, were theſe the Circumſtances of that Confeſſion? I need not aſk you: Your Pamphlet contradicts it. She refuſed to confeſs any ſuch thing, you tell us ſo yourſelf, throughout ſix Hours of ſtrong Sollicitation, and ſhe conſented to do it at laſt: Why? She ſays, and you ſay the ſame, it was becauſe ſhe was elſe to be proſecuted as a Felon.

Let us ſuppoſe the Story as we think it: An innocent and an ignorant Creature ſaw

Perjury

Perjury ſtrong againſt herſelf: She ſaw a Priſon the immediate Conſequence: She ſuppoſed the Oaths that prevailed againſt her Liberty, though innocent, might alſo prevail againſt her Life, though innocent; and, to ſave herſelf from the Effects of this Perjury, ſhe ſubmitted to ſupport the Charge it made againſt others: Againſt thoſe whom ſhe ſuppoſed condemned without her Crime, and whom ſhe thought too certain of Deſtruction to be injured by any thing ſhe added.

That this was the Caſe, her own Account, that of the World, and even yours, concur to prove; nay, and the very Conſequences prove it. If ſhe had ſworn the Truth at this Time, is it, or can it be ſuppoſed, that, unawed and untempted (for I had no Authority, and the Lord Mayor has Teſtimony that he uſed none with her) is it to be ſuppoſed that ſhe would have gone back from it to Falſhood? and that ſhe would have done this at a Time when it might have been deſtructive to herſelf; and when it could only tend to let looſe upon her thoſe whom ſhe had injured, and thoſe whom ſhe always affected at leaſt to fear? Certainly ſhe would not. There could be

in Nature no Motive to her doing it; and the moſt irrational do not act without ſome Impulſe.

But let us aſk the Queſtion on the other Part! We ſhall then find it anſwered eaſily. Let us ſuppoſe we ſee, for 'tis moſt certain we do ſee ſuch a one, a Perſon who had been awed by her Ignorance, and Fears, into ſwearing a Falſhood; after having firſt voluntarily declared, in the ſame Caſe, that which was the Truth: we ſee her conſcious that, by that Oath, ſhe had procured the Sentence of Death againſt a Perſon whom ſhe knew to be innocent; and we ſhall not wonder at the Conſequence. Who is there lives, ſo abandoned, that he can ſay he never felt a Pang of Conſcience? The Ideot, the Atheiſt would in vain attempt to perſuade Men of it. Suppoſe what ſhe had thus ſworn to be falſe, as there are now a Multiplicity of Proofs that it all was falſe, what are we to imagine muſt be the Conſequences? Unqueſtionably, Terror, Anguiſh, and Remorſe; Wiſhes to ſpeak, and Eagerneſs to do it. Where is the Wonder then that ſhe ſhould ſnatch at the firſt Opportunity; that ſhe ſhould be perſuaded to do it, even by the moſt Uneloquent! Where the Wonder

Wonder that ſhe ſhould thus go back into that Truth which ſhe had late denied; and when ſhe had confeſſed the Perjury, declare and teſtify, for ſhe did much more than declare it, her Heart at Eaſe from that which had been a Burden and a Diſtreſs intolerable and inſupportable.

This ſhe declares to be the Fact; and what can be more natural? There is as much Face of Truth in her Recantation ſeen in this Light, as there would be Abſurdity if it were looked upon in another.

But their Informations, you repeat, are ſo alike! Sir, I muſt tell you, they are too like: why do not you alſo ſee it? Indeed the Term *like* is improper; they are not like, for they are in Effect the ſame: And farther, which is an Obſervation that muſt ſting ſomewhere, though theſe their Informations are thus like, their Evidence upon the Tryal was not ſo. That we may know whether theſe could be ſo like without having a common Truth for their Foundation, let us examine into the Circumſtances.

Had *Virtue Hall* ever heard the Story of *Canning* before ſhe gave this Information? For if ſhe had, allowing it all to be falſe, ſhe would aſſuredly make it like hers, by repeating the ſame Circumſtances. Let us enquire then, whether ſhe had ever heard the Story? Yes, ſhe had heard it many times. It appears by her Account, and by the Concurrence of all other Teſtimonies, that ſhe had heard it from *Canning*'s own Mouth at *Enfield* on the 1ſt of *February*; on the ſame Day alſo ſhe ſays ſhe heard it, and undoubtedly ſhe did, at Mr. *Tyſhmaker*'s: For, eight Days after this, the Story of this *Canning*, as herſelf had repeated it now twice in the Hearing of this *Hall*, was publiſhed in the News-Papers, to raiſe Subſcriptions. *Hall* can read; or, if ſhe could not, ſhe had Ears, and ſhe muſt have heard this from all who came to her.

Now let us ſee when 'twas ſhe gave this weighty Information. 'Twas after all this Opportunity of knowing what it was *Canning* ſaid; 'twas on the fourteenth of *February*, and not before, that ſhe was examined by Mr. *Fielding*. There, as himſelf informs us, ſhe was under Examination from ſix to twelve

at

at Night, and then, after many hard Struggles and ſtout Denials, ſuch are his own Words, ſhe did, what? why ſhe put her Mark to an Information; and ſwore what it contained was true. What it contained was the ſame that contained which had before been ſworn by *Canning*. The ſame Perſon drew both; and that not the Magiſtrate, no, nor his Clerk: Who then?—why the Attorney who was engaged to manage the Proſecution.

Now, Syllogiſt, where is your Argument! Can two Perſons who ſwear the ſame thing agree in all Particulars, and yet that thing be falſe? Yes certainly, if one has heard the other's Story. As certainly if the ſame Hand drew up both the Informations, and both that ſwear are perjured. This is the true State of the Queſtion: You beg too much, as you have put it.

But let us ſee how theſe, who agreed ſo well in the written Informations, agreed in verbal Evidence. We ſhall find they did not coincide in that; and we ſhall find a Court of Juſtice is not ſatisfied with a few Queſtions.

Let

Let thoſe who would know this examine the printed Tryal. They will, in that, find *Canning* ſwearing that no body came into the Room all the time ſhe was there, and that ſhe found the Pitcher there: And they will find *Hall* ſwearing that the Pitcher was put into the Room three Hours afterward by the Gipſy. They will find tho' both agree in the Fact, yet a Difference in the Circumſtances even of the Robbery: *Canning* ſwears the two Men took her Stays and went out, while ſhe was yet below; but *Hall* ſwears this was done after ſhe was put up into the Room.

Theſe things, and things like theſe, I doubt not influenced that worthy Magiſtrate firſt to ſuſpect the Truth, who has now proved the Falſity of both their Evidences. Theſe things were not hidden, Sir, from you: How was it that you overlooked them when you wrote this Pamphlet? All I have urged you know; and knew before. You will find it will convince the World, why did it not take that Effect on you? Are you convinced now that you ſee it here? Speak freely; and anſwer to the World this one plain Queſtion, Was it your Head, or what was it that played you falſe before?

None

None will wonder, Sir, that Informations thus taken, and under theſe Circumſtances, ſhould agree in all things, even though both were falſe; nor was it poſſible for the Jury, on hearing the Evidence of both agreeing in general with theſe Informations, to do other than find the Accuſed guilty. None wondered at it, nor will wonder: None were ever weak enough, or wicked enough, to reflect upon them. But although they ſaw nothing to contradict the Truth of all this Swearing, you did, and you acknowledge it: You acknowledge there came before you ſomething to contradict it, and it deſerved its Weight.

Canning's Story appeared improbable; all reſted upon the Evidence of *Hall*: And there was given to you, againſt that Evidence, the Oath of *Judith Natus*, one not belonging to the Gipſies, and whom you have not any Reaſon to apprehend belonging to them; an honeſt Woman, Wife of an honeſt Labourer, who, with her Huſband, lay in the very Room, in which the Girl pretended to have been confined, during the whole time of that alledged Confinement. Here was the Evidence of

a

a Perſon of honeſt Character, and quite diſintereſted, againſt that of *Virtue Hall*, confeſſed of bad Character, and deeply intereſted. This Oath, Sir, you will find was Truth: It will be ſeen: It will be proved that it was ſo, by Evidence the moſt inconteſtible. In the mean time, let me, in the Name of Virtue and Impartiality, aſk the whole World whether this free Oath of an unconcerned Perſon, or the hardly-obtained Information of one who was intereſted, and had the Alternative only of that Information or a Priſon, deſerves the moſt Reſpect?

You aſk, Sir, why this Woman, and with her this Huſband, were not produced upon the Tryal? You tell us you can give but one Anſwer to this, and that you conceal, Sir, I can give another, and it ſhall ſtand openly. The Reaſon is a plain, and 'tis a dreadful one. They were ſubpæna'd, and they were ready at the Court; but the Mob without-doors had been ſo exaſperated againſt all that ſhould appear on the Part of the Accuſed, that they were prevented from getting in, and treated themſelves like Criminals.

This

This is now known, notoriouſly and generally known; nor is the Cauſe a Secret. The Public were prejudiced in the moſt unfair Manner: nor the Public only. Printed Papers were handed about the Court at the time of the Tryal, calculated to enflame every body againſt the Accuſed; even thoſe on whoſe Impartiality the public Juſtice was to depend. I do not ſuppoſe they took ſuch Effect; but that this was the Deſign is plain. It was an Inſolence unprecedented, and ſurely will never be again attempted.

If Means like theſe were uſed within-doors, we cannot doubt enough were employed without; nor wonder that thoſe who could have proved the Innocence of the Accuſed were inſulted, terrified, and driven away. 'Tis eaſy to know what muſt be the Fate of the Guiltleſs, when only thoſe are to appear who accuſe them.

Such is the State, and the exact State, of that Caſe, into which a Suſpicion of Miſinformation at firſt, a Confeſſion of Perjury afterwards, and accumulated Proofs in Support of that Confeſſion, have engaged the Lord Mayor of the City of *London* to

enquire certainly in a virtuous and laudable Manner, even after the Tryal. The Enquiry has anſwered all his Lordſhip's Expectations; the Evidence is clear, and the Proof is full. But for this his impartial Enquiry, made for the ſake of Juſtice only, he is attacked by Calumny and private Prejudice: The envious Hint he muſt be intereſted in it; while others, whoſe Honour is as far beneath his, as their Abilities are inferior, wiſh the Convict guilty, that he may ſink into an Equality. That Magiſtrate is too well informed of the Reſpect due to his Sovereign, not to lay all the Evidences firſt before him; afterwards the whole World will ſee them: And it is on Certainty and Knowledge I ſpeak, who now tell them, that, when they do ſee them, they will be convinced at full.

In the mean time, it is not neceſſary that others ſhould be blamed. Thoſe who are of the contrary Opinion maintain it, becauſe they are ignorant what are the Proofs on which the Innocence of the Convict is ſupported. Every Magiſtrate who has enquired into the Story has a Right to Praiſe from the World for that Enquiry: he has a Right to this, and in Proportion, not to the Succeſs, for that was not in his Hands,

Hands, but to the Pains which he has taken, and the Impartiality by which he has been governed, in the Endeavour.

Thoſe who ſet on foot the Contribution, engaged in it beyond a Doubt as an Act of Juſtice and of Virtue; it is moſt certain that they have had no other Motive: that they have been impoſed on is as certain; but for that others muſt be anſwerable. If it were Juſtice to eſtabliſh the Subſcription, all was Charity and Benevolence in thoſe who encouraged and promoted it; nor is their Generoſity, the Motive to which is ſo palpable and ſo noble, at all affected by the ill Uſe to which it might have been applied.

But while theſe all ſtand not only excuſed but applauded, there certainly is one to whom that Tribute is due in a ſuperior Degree; and it ſhall never be my Crime to mention the Tranſaction, and omit to pay it. While I ſee the Lord Mayor in this juſt and honourable Light, it gives me Pain to find thoſe who are, in all Senſes of the Word ſo vaſtly his Inferiors, and you, Sir! moſt of all, placing themſelves as it were on an Equality with him: and when I conſider, for I know it is ſo, that his

Lordſhip has, from no other Principle but Humanity and a Love of Juſtice, undertaken one of the moſt arduous Taſks that could have been impoſed on Man; and this at his own private Expence, and by his own Labour and inconceivable Trouble: when I ſee him compleating what ſo good a Heart had deſigned, by a Diſcernment equal to his Candour, I own, and, as I am a Stranger and diſintereſted, I glory in owning it, I ſee, with all that Indignation which Honeſty conceives at the low Cunning of the Baſe and Wicked, Inſinuations, for there are ſuch Inſinuations ſpread, that *foul* and *unjuſtifiable* Practices have been uſed ſince the Tryal. You, Mr. *Fielding*, among others, ſay this: But I muſt tell thoſe who invent, and thoſe who can give Credit to it, that the Diſcernment of this honourable Magiſtrate is as much above being impoſed on by ſuch Artifices, as his Honour would be above encouraging them.

It gives me Pain, when I hear Men talk of *this Side* as their own, and of ſome other as his *Lordſhip*'s. He is of no Side or Party; nor has (ſo I have heard him often ſay, and ſo I am convinced) the leaſt Concern which way the Truth ſhall be determined. His ſole Endeavour has been to diſcover

diſcover it; be it what, or where, or how it will: Nor can I hear, without Concern, you, of whoſe Underſtanding I would, for the Sake of the Public, wiſh to think favourably; expreſſing a Deſire that the Government would appoint Perſons, *capable* and *indifferent*, ſuch are your Terms, to enquire into the Matter. Who, Sir, are you, that are thus dictating unto the Government? Retire into yourſelf and know your Station! Who is more *capable*, or who more *indifferent*, than this generous Magiſtrate? Or has there been among the moſt violent and miſguided of this Creature's Friends, any Man, for I will not ſuppoſe you could, but has there been any Man, who has dared to whiſper to his own Heart a Thought that it were otherwiſe?

To this 'tis fit to add, that his Lordſhip, as *Supreme Magiſtrate* of that Court in which the Cauſe was tried, is the proper Perſon for this Examination: and that he has already finiſhed it. Why ſhould it then be ſuppoſed neceſſary, or why proper, to take the Cognizance of an Affair of this Importance, out of his Hands who has a Right to examine into it: or what would be the Juſtice, or what the Gratitude, of appointing

appointing others to do that which he has done already ; and for which he deſerves, and for which he will receive, the univerſal Applauſe of Mankind !

What is the real Caſe, with reſpect to the Girl, Heaven and her own Conſcience only ; at leaſt I hope they only, know. I have no Right to aſſert any Thing, nor do : and my Opinion cannot hurt her. There does appear to have been a Conſpiracy, and a moſt foul and black one : It is poſſible, at leaſt, there may have been ſuch ; this her Friends muſt allow ; and ſhe who has certainly accuſed, and perſecuted to the utmoſt, an innocent Perſon, whether it hath been ignorantly or deſignedly, cannot expect ſhe ſhall eſcape the Suſpicion. That *Squires* is Guiltleſs is beyond all doubt : That *Canning* was not confined in the Houſe of *Wells* is as much beyond all Poſſibllity of doubting. She appears to have proceeded wilfully : but there is a Poſſibility ſhe may have done it ignorantly ; and the World will be glad for her own Sake, that ſhe could prove it a Miſtake ; horrible as it will appear even in that Conſideration.

Thus

Thus ſtands the whole : And upon this Foundation reſts the Innocence of the unhappy Convict. What greater Proof can Innocence require ? What greater can it admit ! Who is there among ourſelves that might not, by the ſame Artifice, have been accuſed, and by the ſame Evidence convicted of the Crime ? Or who is there, had he been ſo accuſed, that could have brought a fuller Proof of Innocence ? I cannot queſtion, but that the Impartial will be convinced : But would all were impartial.

I thought the Public were clear in it before ; but what is there ſo ſwift as Miſinformation ? An Indiſpoſition had ſhut me from the World a few Days, and at the End of that little Period, when I mixed among Men again, what a Change was there in their Opinions ! I left them aſſured, and they had Right to be aſſured of it, of the Convict's Innocence : I find them full in the Belief that ſhe is Guilty : but I do not wonder at this ; nor can I blame the moſt reſolute among them, when I hear the Foundations of the new Opinion. Theſe Deluſions, however, are not calculated for Duration : They ſerve the Purpoſe till they

are

are exploded ; and then who knows the Authors ?

Men hear that all which has been told them, concerning the Convict's being in another Place at the Time of the alledged Robbery, has been ſince diſcovered to be falſe. I, who have told them all that related to the Atteſtation of her being ſo, do now aſſure them, that there has been no ſuch Diſcovery. Nothing has happened to take one Grain from the Weight of any of thoſe Evidences, on which I founded the Opinion ; but many, very many Things, to countenance, ſupport, and prove their Truth. Falſities innumerable have been, indeed, deviſed by the Intereſted, received by the Credulous, and propagated by the Malicious ; but who is there to be found, that will himſelf atteſt any the leaſt Circumſtance that they pretend ?

There are Men, are there not, Mr. *Fielding* ? who cannot bear the Glory this will ſoon bring, and ought to bring, to the great Magiſtrate who has diſcovered the Conſpiracy. And theſe will ſwallow greedily all that they hear againſt it ; and they will propagate that which they don't believe.

lieve. There are Men, who have been deceived: Who now know they have been deceived; but who are aſhamed to own it. A fooliſh Shame: The ſeeing the Deluſion proved upon them, and it will ſoon be proved, will be much greater. Theſe will add to the Numbers that are buſy in ſpreading every Breath of Falſehood: and I am ſorry to add, there may be ſome who even on my Account will be as violent to blaſt the Credit of all that has been doing. Though not conſcious that I deſerve to have one Enemy in the World, I am not ignorant that I have ſeveral; and ſome of theſe are of that idle Kind who live in the meaner Coffeehouſes, and ſpread Reports among the ſucceſſive Companies. Theſe are a Sort of Men, who have not, on any other Occaſion, appeared conſiderable enough to me to juſtify the ſlighteſt Notice; but if their Violence and officious Malice can take any Thing from the Opinion, which the World had entertained of the Credibility of what I have publiſhed, deſigning to be known the Author of it, on this Occaſion; I ſhall for once be ſorry that even ſuch Men were my Enemies.

To one or other of theſe Sets of Perſons; all of them mean, wicked, or intereſted, have been owing the various Reports the World has heard within theſe few Days upon this Occaſion: And not knowing from what Source they have ſprung, Men have not known with what Contempt to treat them. The ſame ſhort Anſwer ſerves for all I have heard; and I deſire no other than to ſtand accountable to all who ſhall diſpute that Anſwer.

I have been told, that the Lord Mayor had given up the Cauſe, finding all Perjury that had been brought before him: There is no Truth in any Part of this. The Lord Mayor never altered his Opinion; he is convinced by Proof of what he firſt gueſſed from Reaſon: And his Lordſhip will, as ſoon as that is proper, convince all the World.

I have been told the Vicar of *Abbotſbury* is, or has been, in Town. There is no Truth in this. That he has contradicted what I have ſaid concerning him: Neither is there in this: On the contrary, he has certified it all in a Letter to a noble Lord,

a Letter which you Mr. *Fielding* know of; and that noble Perſonage alſo countenances, by his Character of this Gentleman, all that his Conduct in the Matter had before ſpoken in his Favour.

It has been ſaid that the Certificates and Affidavits in the Lord Mayor's Hands, ſent up from *Abbotſbury*, and atteſted by this Gentleman, and by the Church-wardens and Overſeers of the Pariſh are forged. There is no Truth in this Report, nor the leaſt Shadow of Foundation for it: They are confirmed. 'Tis ſaid the Letters from that Gentleman are forged: They alſo are authenticated. That the Church-wardens and Overſeers mentioned in thoſe Papers are, or have been, in Town, and contradict the whole: This alſo is wholly untrue; not one of them either has been here, or has contradicted, by Letter, or any other way, any Part of that Evidence: All ſtands on the full Credit that it did. It has been ſaid, that an Exciſeman, now in Town, whoſe Evidence is in itſelf ſufficient, and is a new Teſtimony of Truth in all the other's, had undergone a previous Examination by a Gentleman, whom they even dare to name, before he was ſeen by the Lord

Lord Mayor: I have Authority from that Gentleman to declare, that this alſo is wholly falſe. And I, on *Monday*, heard the Man himſelf ſay, he never ſaw him, till in the Lord Mayor's Preſence. It has been laſtly ſaid, that the Recantation of *Virtue Hall* was not taken in a candid and fair Manner by the Lord Mayor himſelf. Where will Slander ſtop, when it dares riſe to this! All I have ſeen of that was perfectly fair, and moſt particularly candid: And it was a happy Precaution the Lord Mayor uſed, never to ſpeak with her alone.

Theſe are the Stories I have heard; they are related boldly; and they are enough in Number. They are enough to plead in full Excuſe for thoſe which have been wavering in their Opinion; and they will be found enough to condemn their Authors, nay, and the buſy Propagators of them too, to everlaſting Ignominy.

No more can be declared at this Time than I have told; but I ſhall conclude this, as I have done the other Accounts which I have given of theſe Proceedings, with aſſuring thoſe who pay me the Attention of reading it,

it, that the Truth will appear, and that ſoon; under ſuch Proof, as will do immortal Honour to the Magiſtrate who has diſcovered it; will condemn to Shame and Confuſion all who have diſingenuouſly oppoſed it; and will at once, aſtoniſh, and convince the World.

For you, Mr. *Fielding!* I have no Right to call your Behaviour as a Magiſtrate in Queſtion; nor have I Abilities to judge of it: I have, therefore, no where alluded to it: But certainly your private Treatment of this Subject, both before and in your Pamphlet, merits the ſtrongeſt Cenſure.

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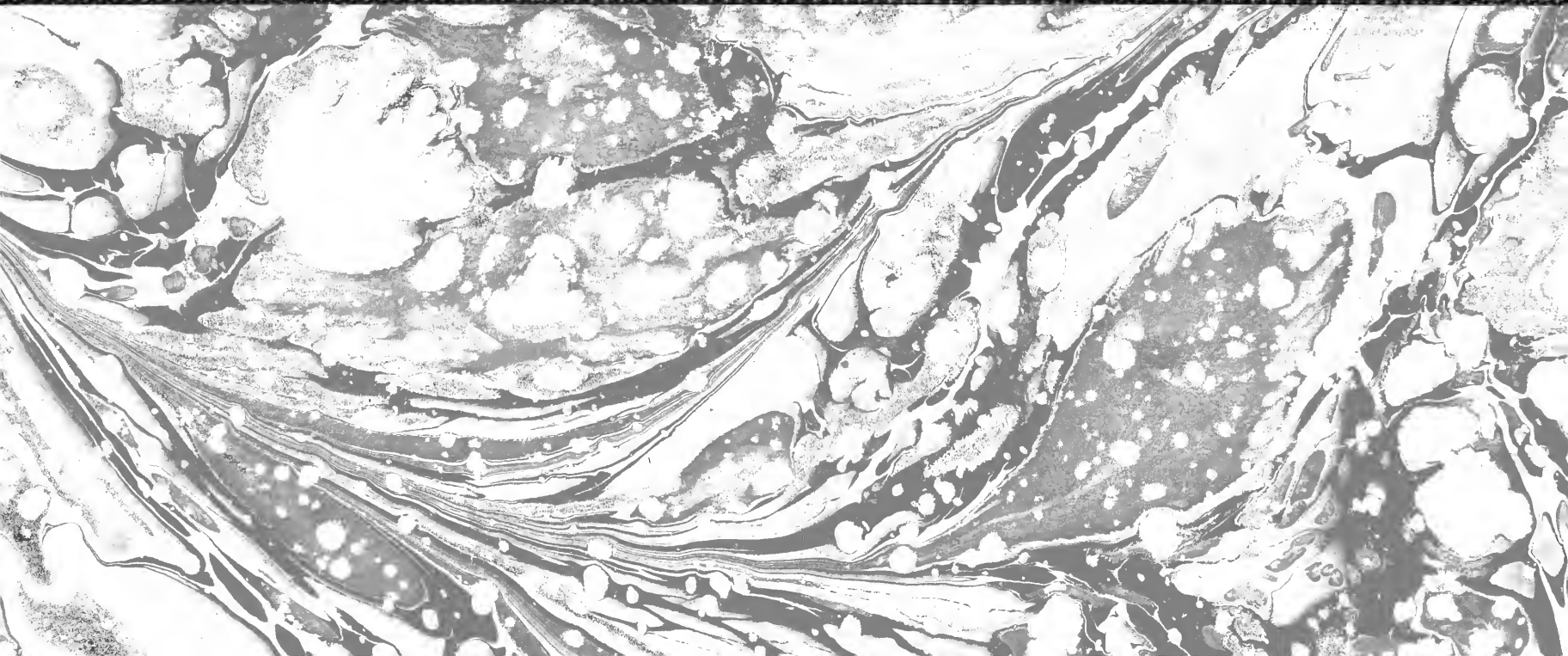
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